

honor your Self

HONOR

“FIND YOUR INNER FIRE. YOUR INNER PUSH. WHETHER IT’S SOMETHING BIG OR SOMETHING LITTLE, STAY TRUE TO THE FULLNESS OF LIFE.”



Leslie Caye 33
Kootenai
White Swan High School, Washington
Salish Kootenai College:
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Indian Education Coordinator

One of Leslie Caye’s favorite Kootenai songs has a valuable lesson. “It teaches you to never give up on yourself,” says Leslie, “and to persevere despite difficult situations that you might find yourself in.” Singing is very important to Leslie and it is the way, he says, that the Kootenai teach and learn. As an Indian educator with the Ronan Schools, Leslie works hard to keep that learning lens on education. “In education,” he says, “we must find ways that are parallel to cultural ways so that both the teachers and the students can understand.” His work focuses mostly on assessing how Native students are succeeding in the educational system. His advice to young people is to balance new knowledge with what the old people teach and to be aware of how you learn and stay true to that process.

Life is a journey that should be valued, says Leslie, who recently discovered joy in the old ways of bow making. “Pay attention,” he advises. “There’s always a way to do things easier,” he says, “but part of the fullness of life is in the way that you do things.”

Traditional ways of knowing are very important to Leslie. The canoe, fishing, hunting, storytelling and bow making have guided his life in ways he is still discovering. “Practice skills that have been given to you,” he says. “They are given to us, handed down to us full and complete. I get up every morning and am thankful that I am Kootenai, thankful that my ancestors have given me my knowledge. We have a responsibility,” he adds. “They are watching us. And they are paying attention.”

“YOU’VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO SEPARATE MAKING A LIVING AND LIVING YOUR LIFE. THE LIVING OF YOUR LIFE MAKES YOU SPECIAL.”



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